

الْبَابُ الثَّانِي

الإِسْلَامُ دِينُ الرَّحْمَةِ وَالْيُسْرِ وَالسَّمَاةِ

CHAPTER TWO

ISLAM IS THE RELIGION OF MERCY, EASE
AND MODERATION

ALMIGHTY ALLAH INFORMED US THAT HIS RELIGION, ISLAM, IS THE seal of all heavenly revealed religions, just as His Beloved Prophet ﷺ is the seal of all Prophets and Messengers ﷺ. Moreover, He made this religion, with its structures of clarity and comprehensiveness, and its overall applicability and conformity with the primordial nature, general and inclusive of all facets of worldly and Afterworldly life, and He made it compatible with and relevant to every time and place.

For this reason, Allah ﷻ has said that He is pleased with this religion:

﴿إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ﴾

﴿Truly, Islam is the only Dīn (Religion) in Allah's sight.﴾¹⁰⁵

He does not accept for anyone to embrace any other faith besides it, and He has informed us that whoever does so is among the losers:

﴿وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ

الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾

﴿And whoever seeks a dīn (religion) other than Islam that shall not at all be accepted from him, and he will be amongst the losers in the Hereafter.﴾¹⁰⁶

2.1 ISLAM DESIRES EASE AND REMOVAL OF HARDSHIPS

This religion corresponds to the innate, primordial nature with which Allah created man. This is why there are no burdensome difficulties, unbearable obligations, or commands to do the impossible.

Just as Almighty Allah made His Exalted Prophet ﷺ a mercy and sent him as the Prophet of Mercy, He also made his religion one of mercy. Islam is a faith of ease without difficulty, glad tidings without

¹⁰⁵ Qur'ān 3:19.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 3:85.

making people feel aversion, good without evil, gentleness without coarseness, light without burden, freedom without shackles, mercy without oppression, justice without transgression, guidance without disbelief or ingratitude, balance without extremism, and moderation without excessiveness. This lies in stark contrast to the previously revealed heavenly religions.

Because of this religion's ease, Allah has removed difficulty and burden and made things easy for the *Umma*. Allah desires ease for it and does not desire difficulty. He has made lawful the pure things and removed from the *Umma* the shackles that were upon the bygone nations. With respect to the previous communities, these shackles were decreed and His commands were good for them and the things He forbade were vile and bad for them; however, He has replaced those shackles with what is better than them. Allah ﷻ said,

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ﴾

﴿Allah desires ease for you and does not desire hardship for you.﴾¹⁰⁷

The entire religion of Islam is structured upon ease and the removal of difficulty. Allah ﷻ said,

﴿هُوَ أَجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ﴾

﴿He has chosen you, and has not laid upon you any hardship or constriction (in the matter of) Dīn (Religion).﴾¹⁰⁸

He also said,

﴿مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ

نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

﴿Allah does not want to make things hard for you, but He wants to purify you, and complete the bestowal of His

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 2:185.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 22:78.

favour upon you so that you may become grateful. ¹⁰⁹

2.2 ISLAM LIGHTENS THE BURDEN OF OBLIGATIONS

Since Allah ﷻ knows the weakness of this *Umma*—because it is the last of the communities—He has lightened for it the legal responsibilities and lessened from it the obligations that it would not be able to fulfil. Allah said,

﴿يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ وَخُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ ضَعِيفًا﴾

Allah intends to lighten your burden. And man has been created weak (and infirm). ¹¹⁰

He also said,

﴿اللَّهُ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا﴾

Allah has, at present, lightened the burden (of His commandment) on you. He knows that there is (some degree of) weakness in you. ¹¹¹

Allah ﷻ informed us that His exalted Prophet ﷺ is a mercy and sent with mercy, and that not only is he the Prophet of Mercy, he is the embodiment of mercy from Allah to the worlds also. Allah ﷻ addressed His noble Prophet:

﴿فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا

مِنْ حَوْلِكَ﴾

(O My Esteemed Beloved!) What a mercy of Allah that you are lenient with them! Had you been stern and hard-hearted, people would have deserted, scattering away from around you. ¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 5:6.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 4:28.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 8:66.

¹¹² Ibid., 3:159.

This also forms a part of the Prophet's description found in the Torah. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr ؓ was once asked about the description of the Prophet ؓ in the Torah. He said, "Yes. By Allah, he is described in the Torah with some of his qualities mentioned in the Qur'an,

﴿يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾

﴿O (Esteemed) Prophet! Surely, We have sent you as a Witness (to the truth and the creation), a Bearer of glad tidings (of the beauty of the Hereafter) and a Warner (of the torment in the Hereafter).﴾¹¹³

You are My slave and Messenger. I have named you al-Mutawakkal [the trustworthy one] who is neither coarse nor harsh, nor loud in the markets. He does not respond to a wrong action with a wrong action; rather he pardons and forgives."¹¹⁴

Allah also made the Prophet ؓ a mercy to the believers in a particular way. Allah said,

﴿وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ قُلْ أُذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

﴿And amongst these (hypocrites) are also those who hurt (the Esteemed) Messenger (blessings and peace be upon him) and say: "He is only an ear (believes everything he hears)." Say: "He is all ears to what is good for you; he believes in Allah and has faith in (what) the believers (say) and is mercy for those of you who have embraced faith. And those who hurt the Messenger of Allah (by means of their evil beliefs, doubts and foul statements), for them there is grievous torment."﴾¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Ibid., 33:45.

¹¹⁴ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Buyū'* [Transactions], Ch.: "The Prohibition of Being Loud and Boisterous in the Marketplace," 2:747 §2018.

¹¹⁵ Qur'an 9:61.

He also made the Prophet ﷺ a mercy to the worlds, believers or otherwise, which sets him apart from all other Messengers ﷺ. Allah said,

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

﴿And, (O Esteemed Messenger,) We have not sent you but as a mercy for all the worlds.﴾¹¹⁶

And Allah made the Prophet ﷺ especially clement and merciful toward the believers:

﴿لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُم بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ﴾

﴿Surely, a (Glorious) Messenger from amongst yourselves has come to you. Your suffering and distress (becomes) grievously heavy on him ﷺ. (O mankind,) he is ardently desirous of your (betterment and guidance. And) he is most (deeply) clement and merciful to the believers.﴾¹¹⁷

One of Allah's mercies to us is that He made one of the Prophet's primary concerns the lifting and removal of the burdens that existed among the previous nations. Allah said,

﴿الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ الَّذِي أَلْمَأَمَى الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ﴾

﴿(They are the people) who follow the Messenger, the Prophet (titled as) al-Ummī (who imparts to the people from Allah the news of the unseen and knowledge and secrets of socio-economic disciplines of life without himself being taught by

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 21:107.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 9:128.

any human in the world); whose (eminent attributes and exquisite powers) these people find written in the Torah and the Injil (Gospel); who enjoins on them virtues and forbids them vices, declares wholesome things lawful and impure ones unlawful for them and removes from them their heavy burdens and yokes (i.e., shackles) weighing upon them (due to their acts of disobedience and blesses them with freedom). 118

2.3 ISLAM TEACHES EASINESS AND DOES NOT APPROVE OF HARSHNESS

The Prophet ﷺ informed us that he was sent to bring ease and not difficulty. Ease is the implication of mercy, for if it were not, things would not have been made easy. Jābir reported in the hadith about the Mothers of the Believers and their request to Allah's Messenger to increase in his spending upon them, and his withdrawal from them for one month and the revelation of the verse giving him a choice and his recitation of the verse to 'Ā'isha. In it, the Prophet ﷺ said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَبْعَنِي مُعْتًا وَلَا مُتَعْتًا، وَلَكِنْ بَعَثَنِي مُعَلِّمًا مَيِّسِّرًا.

Indeed, Allah did not send me to be harsh or cause harm; He sent me to teach and make things easy.¹¹⁹

Reported by Muslim.

The Prophet's Companions have related that one of his noble characteristics was that he made things easy and did not make things difficult. They related how he loved to lighten the *Umma's* burdens. This is only because the Prophet ﷺ was a mercy sent with mercy, and with a religion of mercy that brings ease. Al-Arzaq b. Qays related a hadith that he heard during the battle against the Ḥarūriyya at Ahwāz. He mentioned that Abū Burza al-Aslamī said,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 7:157.

¹¹⁹ Set forth by •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Ṭalāq* [The Divorce], Ch.: "Merely Giving a Woman the Option of Divorce Does not Make the Divorce Effective, But Only When it is Actually Intended," 2:1104 §1478.

غَزَوْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ سِتَّ غَزَوَاتٍ، أَوْ سَبْعَ غَزَوَاتٍ، وَثَمَانِي،
وَشَهِدْتُ تَيْسِيرَهُ.

I have waged six, seven, or eight battles with Allah's Messenger ﷺ and I saw his way of making things easy.¹²⁰

Reported by al-Bukhārī.

The Mother of the Believers, 'Ā'isha رضي الله عنها, said,

وَالَّذِي ذَهَبَ بِهِ، مَا تَرَكُهُمَا حَتَّى لَقِيَ اللَّهَ، وَمَا لَقِيَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى حَتَّى تُقَلَ
عَنِ الصَّلَاةِ، وَكَانَ يُصَلِّي كَثِيرًا مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ قَاعِدًا — تَعْنِي الرُّكْعَتَيْنِ بَعْدَ
الْعَصْرِ — وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ يُصَلِّيهِمَا، وَلَا يُصَلِّيهِمَا فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، خِشْيَةً
أَنْ يُثْقَلَ عَلَى أُمَّتِهِ، وَكَانَ يُحِبُّ مَا يُخَفِّفُ عَنْهُمْ.

By the One Who took him, he did not leave it until he met Allah, and he did not meet Allah until the prayer became heavy for him. He would pray many of his prayers sitting down [i.e., the two units after the 'Aṣr prayer]. He would pray them at home and would not pray them at the Mosque, for fear of making things hard for his *Umma*. He used to love that which made things lightened for them.¹²¹

Reported by al-Bukhārī.

2.4 THE HOLY PROPHET ﷺ CHOSE THE EASIER OF THE TWO OPTIONS

One of the many manifestations of the Prophet's mercy, and one which is an example for the believers to follow, is that he was never presented two options except that he would choose the easier of the two, so long as it was not a sin. If it was a sin, he would be the farthest of people

¹²⁰ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-ʿAmal fī al-ṣalāt* [On Extraneous Actions Performed in the Prayer], Ch.: "When One's Animal Runs Away During the Prayer," 1:405 §1153.

¹²¹ Ibid., Bk.: *Mawāqīt al-ṣalāt* [The Timing of the Prayers], Ch.: "On the Missed Prayers that Can Be Prayed After the 'Aṣr Prayer," 1:213 §565.

from it. 'A'isha رضي الله عنها said,

مَا خَيْرَ رَسُولٍ لِّلَّهِ ﷺ بَيْنَ أَمْرَيْنِ، إِلَّا أَخَذَ أَيْسَرَهُمَا، مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ إِثْمًا. فَإِنْ كَانَ إِثْمًا كَانَ أَبْعَدَ النَّاسِ مِنْهُ، وَمَا انْتَقَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ لِنَفْسِهِ، إِلَّا أَنْ تُنْتَهَكَ حُرْمَةُ اللَّهِ، فَيَنْتَقِمَ اللَّهُ بِهَا.

Never was Allah's Messenger ﷺ presented with two options except that he would choose the easier of the two, so long as it was not a sin. If it was a sin, he would be the farthest of people from it. Never did Allah's Messenger ﷺ take revenge for himself. Vengeance would only be taken if the sanctities of Allah were violated.¹²²

Agreed upon.

2.5 THE BEST OF YOUR RELIGION IS THE MIDDLE COURSE

Another manifestation of Allah's lordly mercy upon creation is the fact that He made this religion one of ease and moderation, and instructed its followers to have temperance and not to make things hard upon themselves. The extremist, we are informed, is overcome by the religion. Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said,

إِنَّ الدِّينَ يُسْرٌ، وَلَكِنْ يُشَادُّ الدِّينَ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا غَلَبَهُ. فَسَدِّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا، وَأَبْشِرُوا
وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالْغَدْوَةِ وَالرَّوْحَةِ، وَشَيْءٍ مِنَ الدَّلْجَةِ.

Indeed, the religion is ease, and no one makes it hard on himself save that he will be overpowered. So direct yourselves to what is right, follow a middle course, be of good cheer, and seek help [by worshipping] in the morning, evening and some of the night.¹²³

¹²² Ibid., Bk.: *al-Manāqib* [The Exemplary Virtues], Ch.: "The Qualities of the Prophet ﷺ," 3:1306 §3367; •Muslim in *al-Shāḥih*: Bk.: *al-Faḍā'il* [Virtues], Ch.: "The Prophet's Distance Away from Sins," 4:1813 §2327.

¹²³ Ibid., Bk.: *al-Īmān* [The Faith], Ch.: "The Religion is Ease," 1:23 §39.

Reported by al-Bukhārī.

Abū Qatāda رضي الله عنه related from the Bedouin who heard Allah's Messenger ﷺ say,

إِنَّ خَيْرَ دِينِكُمْ أَيْسَرُهُ؛ إِنَّ خَيْرَ دِينِكُمْ أَيْسَرُهُ.

Indeed, the best of your religion is the easiest of it; indeed, the best of your religion is the easiest of it.¹²⁴

Reported by Aḥmad with an authentic chain.

Urwa al-Fuqaymī رضي الله عنه said,

كُنَّا نَنْتَظِرُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ، فَخَرَجَ رَجُلًا؛ يَقْطُرُ رَأْسُهُ مِنْ وُضْوءٍ أَوْ غُسْلٍ، فَصَلَّى. فَلَمَّا قَضَى الصَّلَاةَ، جَعَلَ النَّاسُ يَسْأَلُونَهُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَعَلَيْنَا حَرَجٌ فِي كَذَا؟ فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: لَا، أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، إِنَّ دِينَ اللَّهِ فِي يُسْرٍ.

Once we were waiting for the Prophet ﷺ and he suddenly came out wet with water dripping from his head from the ablution or bath [*ghusl*] and he began to pray. After he completed his prayer, some of the people asked him, 'O Allah's Messenger! Is there any problem with us doing this [i.e., offering prayers without wiping the ablution water or allowing it to dry]?' The Messenger ﷺ said thrice, 'No, O people! The religion of Allah is found in ease.'¹²⁵

Reported by Aḥmad, Ibn Abī 'Āsim, Abū Ya'lā and al-Ṭabarānī. Al-Hāfiz Ibn Ḥajar declared this is an authentic tradition.

¹²⁴ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 3:479; •al-Haythamī in *Majma' al-zawā'id*, 1:61; and cited by •Ibn Ḥajar in *Fath al-Bārī*, 1:94; while al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, 18:230 §573; •Ibn Abī 'Āsim in *al-Āḥād wa al-mathānī*, 4:349 §2383; al-Qudā'ī in *Musnad al-Shihāb*, 2:219-220 §§1224-1225; and al-Maqdisī in *al-Aḥādīth al-mukhtāra* (7:132 §2565).

¹²⁵ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 5:69; •al-Bukhārī in *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, 7:30-31 §135; •Ibn Abī 'Āsim in *al-Āḥād wa al-mathānī*, 2:397 §1190; •Abū Ya'lā in *al-Musnad*, 12:274 §6863; •Ibn al-Qānī in *Mu'jam al-Ṣaḥāba*, 2:262 §780; and cited by •al-Haythamī in *Majma' al-zawā'id*, 1:61-62.

2.6 PROHIBITION OF EXTREMISM AND COMMANDMENT OF MODERATION

According to ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه, Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said,

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْغُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ، فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ الْغُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ.

Beware of going to extremes in the religion, for the only thing that destroyed those before you was extremism in the religion.¹²⁶

Reported by al-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah and Ibn Ḥibbān.

According to Burayda b. al-Ḥaṣīb رضي الله عنه, Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said,

عَلَيْكُمْ هَدْيًا قَاصِدًا، عَلَيْكُمْ هَدْيًا قَاصِدًا، عَلَيْكُمْ هَدْيًا قَاصِدًا، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشَادَّ هَذَا الدِّينَ يَغْلِبُهُ.

Stick to the moderate way! Stick to the moderate way! Stick to the moderate way, for no one makes the religion hard on himself save that it will overcome him.¹²⁷

Reported by Aḥmad and al-Ṭayālīsī. Ibn Khuzayma and al-Ḥākim declared it authentic.

In addition to this, the Prophet ﷺ informed us that he was sent with the way of tolerance and moderation. And the most beloved of the religion in the sight of Allah ﷻ is the way of tolerance and moderation. Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه narrated,

قِيلَ لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ: أَيُّ الْأَدْيَانِ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: الْخَنِيفَةُ السَّمْحَةُ.

A man asked Allah’s Messenger ﷺ, ‘What religion is the

¹²⁶ Set forth by •al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan*, 5:268 §3058; •Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, 2:1008 §3029; •Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 9:183–184 §3871; •Abū Ya’lā, *al-Musnad*, 4:316 §2427; •al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-kabīr*, 12:156 §12747; •al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 5:127.

¹²⁷ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 5:350, 361; •al-Ṭayālīsī, *al-Musnad*, p. 109 §809; •Ibn Abī ‘Āsim, *al-Sunna*, 1:46 §95; •Ibn Khuzayma, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:199 §1179; •al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 1:457 §1176; •al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 3:18.

most beloved in the sight of Allah?’ The Messenger replied, ‘The tolerant *ḥanafīyya* way.’¹²⁸

Reported by al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab al-mufrad*, Aḥmad and ‘Abd b. Ḥumayd.

Here we see that Allah’s Messenger was sent with the tolerant *ḥanafīyya* way, and that there is expansiveness in this religion, in contrast to the religion of the Jews and the Christians.

According to ‘Ā’isha رضي الله عنها, Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said on the occasion of ‘Id,

لَتَعْلَمَ يَهُودُ أَنَّ فِي دِينِنَا فَسْحَةً، إِنِّي أُرْسِلْتُ بِحَنِيفَةٍ سَمْحَةٍ.

The Jews do know that our religion has expansiveness, and that I have been sent with the tolerant *ḥanafīyya* way.¹²⁹

Reported by Aḥmad and al-Ḥumaydī. This is an authentic hadith whose origin is found in the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim from the story of the Abyssinians dancing in the Mosque.¹³⁰

2.7 NO SOUL SHOULD BE BURDENED BEYOND ITS ABILITY

One of the manifestations of the tolerance and moderation of Islam is that Allah ﷻ does not burden a soul with more than it can bear, whether in acts of worship, interactions or other things.

Allah ﷻ said,

﴿لَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا﴾

﴿We do not burden any soul beyond its ability to bear it.﴾¹³¹

¹²⁸ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 1:236; •‘Abd b. Ḥumayd, *al-Musnad*, p. 199 §569; •al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, p. 108 §287.

¹²⁹ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 6:116, 233; •al-Ḥumaydī, *al-Musnad*, 1:123 §254; •Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, 2:444.

¹³⁰ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 1:173 §443 and 3:1063 §2745; •Muslim, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:608–610 §892–893.

¹³¹ Qur’ān 6:152.

﴿لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ ۖ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ﴾

Allah does not put under stress any soul more than its endurance. There is a reward for whatever good it has earned, and there is torment for whatever evil it has perpetrated. "O our Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or do some mistake. O our Lord, lay not on us such a (heavy) burden as You laid on those before us. O our Lord, put not on us (also) the burden that we have not the strength to bear, and overlook (our sins), and forgive us and have mercy on us. You alone are our Master and Helper. So grant us victory over the disbelievers." ¹³²

Moreover, with every difficulty, Allah provides relief out of His mercy and ease to His servants, lest they despair. Allah said,

﴿فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۖ إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا﴾

So surely ease (comes) with every hardship. Verily, with (this) hardship (too) there is ease. ¹³³

For this reason, one difficulty cannot overcome two eases. According to Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said,

دَعُونِي مَا تَرَكْتُكُمْ. إِنَّمَا هَلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ بِسُؤَالِهِمْ وَاخْتِلَافِهِمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ. فَإِذَا هَيَّئْتُكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ، وَإِذَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِأَمْرٍ فَأَتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ.

Do not enquire of me so long as I leave you, for the people

¹³² Ibid., 2:286.

¹³³ Ibid., 94:5-6.

before you were only destroyed due to their [incessant] questioning and differing with their Prophets. When I forbid you something, abstain from it, and when I command you to do something, do it as much as you are able.¹³⁴

Agreed upon.

Whenever the Prophet ﷺ would take the pledge of fealty [*bay'at*] from someone—man or women—he would always add at the end “as much as you are able.” ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar ؓ said,

كُنَّا إِذَا بَايَعْنَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَلَى السَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ، يَقُولُ لَنَا: فِيمَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ.

When we would pledge fealty to Allah’s Messenger ﷺ that we would hear and obey, he would add, ‘As much as you are able’.¹³⁵

Agreed upon.

Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh ؓ said,

بَايَعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ عَلَى السَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ، فَلَقَّنِي: فِيمَا اسْتَطَعْتُ.

I pledged fealty to Allah’s Messenger ﷺ with the condition that I hear and obey, and he added, ‘As much as you are able’.¹³⁶

Agreed upon.

Umayma b. Ruqayya ؓ said,

¹³⁴ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-ʿIṭṣām* [The Holding Fast to the Qurʾān and Sunna], Ch.: “Emulating the Sunnas of Allah’s Messenger ﷺ,” 6:2658 §6858; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Faḍāʾil* [The Virtues], Ch.: “Respect for the Prophet ﷺ and Avoiding Frequent Questions Posed to Him as Long as There is No Harm,” 4:1832 §2359.

¹³⁵ Ibid., Bk.: *al-Aḥkām* [The Legal Rulings], Ch.: “How the Imam is to Take the Pledge of Fealty from the People,” 6:2633 §6776; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Imāra* [The Leadership], Ch.: “Swearing fealty for listening to and obeying the orders of the leader as far as possible,” 3:1490 §1867.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 6:2633 §6778; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Imān* [The Faith], Ch.: “Explanation that the Religion is Sincere Counsel,” 1:75 §56.

أَتَيْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ فِي نِسْوَةٍ بَايَعْنَهُ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ. فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، نَبَايِعُكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا نُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا نَسْرِقَ وَلَا نَزْنِيَ وَلَا نَقْتُلَ أَوْلَادَنَا وَلَا نَأْتِيَ بِيَهْتَانٍ نَفَرِيهِ بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَأَرْجُلِنَا وَلَا نَعْصِيكَ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ. قَالَ: فِيمَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَطَعْتُمْ. قَالَتْ: فَقُلْنَا: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَرْحَمُ مِنَّا بِأَنْفُسِنَا.

I went to Allah's Messenger with a group of women in order to pledge fealty to him on Islam. We said, 'O Allah's Messenger! We pledge our fealty to you that we will not associate any partner with Allah and that we will not steal, fornicate, kill our children, or bring calumny or disobey you in what is good.' Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'As much as you are able and can bear.' We said, 'Allah and His Messenger are more merciful to us than we are to ourselves!'¹³⁷

Reported by Aḥmad and Mālik.

2.8 THINGS BE MADE EASY SO THAT PEOPLE MAY NOT FEEL AVERSION

The Prophet ﷺ encouraged his *Umma* to make things easy, not to make things difficult. He urged them to be of good cheer, not to drive people away.

According to Anas b. Mālik رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said,

يَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا، وَبَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا.

Make things easy and do not make things difficult. Give glad tidings and do not make people feel aversion.¹³⁸

Agreed upon.

¹³⁷ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 6:357, 365; •Mālik in *al-Muwattaʿa*, 2:982 §1775.

¹³⁸ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-ʿIlm* [Knowledge], Ch.: "On the Prophet ﷺ Being Careful about Giving People Admonition and Knowledge Lest They Feel Aversion to It," 1:38 §69; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Jihād wa al-siyar* [The Striving and Military Expeditions], Ch.: "The Command to Make Things Easy and Not Making Others Feel Aversion," 3:1359 §1734.

According to Abū Burda رضي الله عنه, when the Prophet ﷺ sent Mu'adh b. Jabal and Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī رضي الله عنه to Yemen, he said,

يَسِّرَا وَلَا تُعَسِّرَا، وَبَشِّرَا وَلَا تُنْفِرَا، وَتَطَاوَعَا وَلَا تَخْتَلِفَا.

Make things easy and do not make things difficult. Give glad tidings and do not make people feel aversion. Obey one another and do not differ with each other.¹³⁹

Agreed upon.

In another narration in Muslim's collection, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī رضي الله عنه said, "When Allah's Messenger ﷺ would dispatch one of his Companions he would say to him,

بَشِّرُوا وَلَا تُنْفِرُوا، وَيَسِّرُوا وَلَا تُعَسِّرُوا.

'Give glad tidings and do not make people feel aversion. Make things easy and do not make things difficult.'¹⁴⁰

In this narration, the Prophet ﷺ used the verb in the plural form in order to indicate them and others.

Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه narrated in the story of the Bedouin who urinated in the Mosque, 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ said,

دَعُوهُ وَهَرِيقُوا عَلَى بَوْلِهِ سَجَلًا مِنْ مَاءٍ، أَوْ ذَنْبًا مِنْ مَاءٍ؛ فَإِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُمْ
مُيسِّرِينَ، وَلَمْ تُبْعَثُوا مُعَسِّرِينَ.

"Leave him. Pour a bucket or pail of water on his urine. You were sent to make things easy and not to make things difficult."¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Ibid., Bk.: *al-Maghāzī* [The Expeditions], Ch.: "Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and Mu'adh's Mission to Yemen before the Farewell Pilgrimage," 3:1104 §2873; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ibid., 3:1359 §1733.

¹⁴⁰ Set forth by •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ibid., 3:1358 §1732; •Abū Dāwūd in *al-Sunan*, 4:260 §4835.

¹⁴¹ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Wuḍū'* [The Ablution], Ch.: "Pouring Water Over Urine in the Mosque," 1:89 §217; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Taḥāra* [The Purification], Ch.: "The Obligation to Wash Away Urine and Other Impurities," 1:236 §284-285.

Agreed upon.

Had Allah's Messenger ﷺ only said 'make things easy' it would apply to anyone who received ease, even if that person experienced numerous difficulties after it; however, the Prophet ﷺ also said, 'and do not make things difficult,' which negates difficulties in all circumstances.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ explained the virtue of the one who makes things easy for servants who experience difficulty, and said that Allah ﷻ will in turn make things easy for him in this life and the Next. According to Abū Hurayra ؓ, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said,

مَنْ نَفَّسَ عَنْ مُؤْمِنٍ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ الدُّنْيَا، نَفَّسَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ كُرْبَةً مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ؛ وَمَنْ يَسِّرْ عَلَى مُعْسِرٍ، يَسِّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

Whoever relieves a believer of a difficulty from the difficulties of this world, Allah shall relieve for him a difficulty from the difficulties of the Day of Resurrection. And whoever lightens the burden of someone in difficulty, Allah shall lighten his burden in this life and the Next.¹⁴²

Reported by Muslim.

2.9 PRESCRIPTION OF A BALANCED AND MODERATE WAY OF LIFE

Another manifestation of mercy for this *Umma* is the fact that the Prophet ﷺ made moderation and ease incumbent, and he made extremism, excessiveness and fanaticism forbidden in all things, whether in acts of worship, interactions or other facets of life. For this reason, there are numerous occasions where the Prophet ﷺ says,

عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَمَلُّ حَتَّى تَمَلُّوا، وَإِنْ أَحَبَّ الْأَعْمَالُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَا دُوِّمَ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنْ قَلَّ.

¹⁴² Set forth by •Muslim in *al-Sahīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Dhikr wa al-duʿā* [The Remembrance and Supplication], Ch.: "The Virtue of Congregating to Recite the Qur'ān and Invoke," 4:1996 §2580.

Stick to the actions you can bear, for Allah does not tire until you tire. Indeed, the most beloved of actions in the sight of Allah are those that are the most consistent, even if they are only a little.¹⁴³

This hadith describes fasting and prayer and other acts of worship.

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ married his son ‘Abd Allāh to one of the noblewomen of Quraysh, but ‘Abd Allāh did not consummate the marriage with her because he was occupied with devotions, standing the night in prayer and shunning sleep, and fasting during the day and never breaking his fast. When ‘Amr informed Allah’s Messenger about his son’s acts, the Messenger forbade him and guided him to the path of moderation and balance, saying,

فَإِنَّ لِحَسَدِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، وَإِنَّ لِعَيْنِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، وَإِنَّ لِرِزْوَجِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا، وَإِنَّ لِرِزْوَرِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا.

Indeed, your body has a right over you; your eyes have a right over you; your wife has a right over you; and your neighbour has a right over you.

In the narration of Muslim, it adds:

إِنَّكَ لَا تَدْرِي لَعَلَّكَ يَطُولُ بِكَ عُمْرٌ.

You do not know, perhaps you will live for a long time.

‘Abd Allāh said, ‘When I grew older I wished that I had accepted the dispensation of Allah’s Prophet.’¹⁴⁴

Agreed upon.

¹⁴³ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Īmān* [The Faith], Ch.: “The Most Beloved Element of the Religion in the Sight of Allah is the Most Consistent of It,” 1:24 §43; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn* [The Travelers’ Prayer], Ch.: “The Virtue of Consistent Actions Such as Night Vigil Prayer and the Like,” 1:540 §782.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Bk.: *al-Ṣawm* [The Fasting], Ch.: “The Body’s Right When Fasting,” 2:697 §1874; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Ṣiyām* [The Fasting], Ch.: “The Prohibition of Perpetual Fasts for Those Who are Harmed by Them,” 2:812–817 §1159.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ also forbade 'Uthmān b. Maz'ūn from celibacy. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās said,

رَدَّ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَلَى عُثْمَانَ بْنِ مَظْعُونٍ التَّبَتُّلَ، وَلَوْ أَذِنَ لَهُ لَأَخْتَصَيْنَا.

The Prophet forbade 'Uthmān b. Maz'ūn from celibacy, and had he permitted him, we would have castrated ourselves.¹⁴⁵

Agreed upon.

Anas b. Mālik said,

جَاءَ ثَلَاثَةٌ رَهْطٍ إِلَى بُيُوتِ أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ. فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا كَانَتْهُمْ تَقَالُوبًا، فَقَالُوا: وَأَيْنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ؟ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ: أَمَا أَنَا، فَإِنِّي أَصِلِّي اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا. وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَصُومُ الدَّهْرَ وَلَا أَفْطِرُ. وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَعْتَرِلُ النِّسَاءَ، فَلَا أَتَزَوَّجُ أَبَدًا. فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِلَيْهِمْ، فَقَالَ: أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ قُلْتُمْ كَذَا وَكَذَا؟ أَمَا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَخْشَاكُمْ لِلَّهِ وَأَتَقَاكُمْ لَهُ. لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأَفْطِرُ، وَأَصِلِّي وَأَرْقُدُ، وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ. فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي.

A group of three people went to the Prophet's wives and asked them about his worship. After they were informed of his devotions, they seemed to consider it small. They said, 'How can we possibly compare to the Prophet ﷺ when Allah has forgiven all the earlier and later sins (of all the people of your *Umma*)?' One of them said, 'As for me, I shall always pray the entire night.' Another said, 'As for me, I shall fast perpetually and never break my fast.' And the last one said, 'As for me, I shall shun women and never marry.' Thereafter the Prophet ﷺ came to them and asked, 'Do you say such-and-such? As for me, by Allah, I have the most fear of Allah

¹⁴⁵ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Nikāḥ* [Marriage], Ch.: "The Prohibition celibacy and castration," 5:1952 §4786; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Nikāḥ* [Marriage], Ch.: "Fasting of that who is unable to support and marry," 2:1020 §1402.

and awe of Him, yet I fast and break my fast, I pray and take rest, and I marry women. Whoever shuns my Sunna is not from me.”¹⁴⁶

Agreed upon.

Once the Prophet ﷺ saw an elderly man being carried between his two sons. The Prophet ﷺ asked, “What is the matter with him?” The Companions رضي الله عنهم replied, “He vowed to walk [in the pilgrimage].” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Indeed, Allah has no need of this man’s self-torture,” and then he ordered the man to mount a riding animal.¹⁴⁷

When ‘Uqba b. ‘Amir رضي الله عنه asked the Prophet ﷺ for a verdict concerning his sister’s vow to perform the Hajj barefooted, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Let her walk and ride.”¹⁴⁸

Allah’s Messenger ﷺ commanded us to deal with matters using gentleness, softness and ease, and he cautioned us against force lest people despair. Further, the Prophet ﷺ informed us that for every servant or action there is a period of activity followed by a period of inactivity, and that the best of all things are those in accordance with his Sunna. Anas رضي الله عنه said,

دَخَلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ الْمَسْجِدَ، وَحَبْلٌ مَمْدُودٌ بَيْنَ سَارِيَتَيْنِ. فَقَالَ: مَا هَذَا؟ قَالُوا الزَّيْنَبُ تُصَلِّي. فَإِذَا كَسِلَتْ أَوْ فَتِرَتْ أَمَسَكَتْ بِهِ. فَقَالَ: حُلُّوهُ. ثُمَّ قَالَ: لِيُصَلِّ أَحَدُكُمْ نَشَاطَةً. فَإِذَا كَسِلَ أَوْ فَتَرَ، فَلْيَقْعُدْ.

Allah’s Messenger ﷺ once entered the mosque and discovered a rope tied between two pillars. He asked, ‘What is this?’ and the Companions رضي الله عنهم replied, ‘This is used by Zaynab when she prays; whenever she gets tired or fatigued, she holds onto

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., Bk.: *al-Nikāḥ* [The Marriage], Ch.: “The Encouragement to Marry,” 5:1949 §4776; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Nikāḥ* [Marriage], Ch.: “The Recommendation of Marriage for Those who are Able,” 2:1020 §1401.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Bk.: *Jazā’ al-ṣayd* [The Penalty for Hunting During Hajj], Ch.: “Concerning the One Who Vows to Walk to the Ka’ba,” 2:659 §1766; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Nadhr* [Vows], Ch.: Concerning the One Who Vows to Walk to the Ka’ba,” 3:1263 1642.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

it.' The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Untie it.' Then he said, 'You should pray for as long as you have the energy, but once you become drowsy or fatigued you should sit down.'¹⁴⁹

Reported by Muslim and the wording is Aḥmad's.

2.10 EXTREMISM DESTROYS COMMUNITIES

Anas ؓ reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,

إِنَّ هَذَا الدِّينَ مَتِينٌ، فَأَوْغِلُوا فِيهِ بِرِفْقٍ.

Indeed, this religion is powerful, so advance to it with gentleness.¹⁵⁰

Reported by Aḥmad and al-Ḍiyā' al-Maqdisī in *al-Mukhtāra*.

Similarly, there is the hadith of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās ؓ mentioned earlier:

إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْعُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ. فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ الْعُلُوَّ فِي الدِّينِ.

Beware of going to extremes in the religion, for the only thing that destroyed those before you was extremism in the religion.¹⁵¹

Reported by Aḥmad, al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah and Ibn al-Jārūd. Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim declared it authentic.

The takeaway from all of this is that the Muslim should not cause his self to resent the worship of Allah, for the one who burdens his riding animal more than it can bear will neither travel across a land

¹⁴⁹ Set forth by •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *Ṣalāt al-musāfirin* [The Travelers' Prayer], Ch.: "The Command for the One who is Drowsy while Praying, or Who Mixes up The Qur'ān or Remembrance, to Take Rest," 1:541 §784; •Aḥmad b. anbal in *al-Musnad*, 3:101.

¹⁵⁰ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 6:198; •al-Maqdisī, *al-Aḥādīth al-mukhtāra*, 6:120 §2115.

¹⁵¹ Set forth by •al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan*, 5:268 §3058; •Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, 2:1008 §3029; •Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 9:183-184 §3871; •Abū Ya'la, *al-Musnad*, 4:316 §2427; •al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-kabīr*, 12:156 §12747; •al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 5:127.

nor preserve its strength.

The exalted Messenger ﷺ taught that when someone experiences drowsiness while praying, he should take rest and discontinue his prayer. 'Ā'isha رضى الله عنها reported that the Prophet ﷺ said,

إِذَا نَعَسَ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِ فَلْيَرْقُدْ، حَتَّى يَذْهَبَ عَنْهُ النَّوْمُ؛ فَإِنْ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا صَلَّى وَهُوَ نَاعِسٌ، لَا يَدْرِي لَعَلَّهُ يَذْهَبُ يَسْتَغْفِرُ فَيُسَبِّحُ نَفْسَهُ.

When one of you experiences drowsiness while praying, he should lie down until he is no longer sleepy. If someone prays when he is drowsy, he may not know whether he is asking for forgiveness or cursing himself.¹⁵²

This hadith is narrated by Mālik.

Another manifestation of the tolerance, ease and moderation of Islam is the fact that the Prophet forbade extremism and excessiveness in statements or actions. According to 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd رضى الله عنه, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said thrice,

هَلَكَ الْمُتَنَطِعُونَ.

The extremists have perished.¹⁵³

According to this hadith, extremism is forbidden since it leads a Muslim to destruction.

Another manifestation of the tolerance, ease, moderation and mercy in Islam is the fact that it is possible for a Muslim to catch up if he misses something, so long as he does not miss it by neglecting a legal ruling or abandon it altogether. This is why we find numerous instances where the Prophet ﷺ would say, "Do it; there is no harm done."

¹⁵² Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Wuḍū'* [The Ablution], Ch.: "On Performing Ablution after Sleep," 1:87 §209; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *Ṣalāt al-musāfirīn* [The Travelers' Prayer], Ch.: "The Command for the One who is Drowsy while Praying, or Who Mixes up The Qur'ān or Remembrance, to Take Rest," 1:542 §786.

¹⁵³ Set forth by •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-'Ilm* [The Knowledge], Ch.: "The Extremists Have Perished," 4:2055 §2670.

According to ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ رضي الله عنه:

إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَقَفَ فِي حَجَّةِ الْوَدَاعِ بِمِنَى لِلنَّاسِ يَسْأَلُونَهُ. فَجَاءَهُ رَجُلٌ، فَقَالَ: لَمْ أَشْعُرْ، فَحَلَقْتُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَذْبَحَ. فَقَالَ: اذْبَحْ وَلَا حَرَجَ. فَجَاءَ آخَرُ، فَقَالَ: لَمْ أَشْعُرْ فَتَحَرْتُ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَرْمِيَ. قَالَ: ارْمِ وَلَا حَرَجَ. فَمَا سُئِلَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ عَنْ شَيْءٍ قَدَّمَ وَلَا أَخَّرَ إِلَّا قَالَ: افْعَلْ وَلَا حَرَجَ.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ stood at Mina during the farewell pilgrimage as the people were asking him questions. A man came to him and said, "I inadvertently had my hair cut before I sacrificed." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Sacrifice; there is no harm done." Another man came and said, "I inadvertently sacrificed an animal before I cast the stones." The Prophet ﷺ said, "Cast them; there is no harm done." Everything that the Prophet ﷺ was asked about before or after its time, he replied, "Do it; there is no harm done."¹⁵⁴

Agreed upon.

Sa‘īd b. Jubayr رضي الله عنه said,

حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ جَمَعَ بَيْنَ الصَّلَاةِ فِي سَفَرَةٍ سَافَرَهَا فِي غَزْوَةِ تَبُوكَ، فَجَمَعَ بَيْنَ الظُّهْرِ وَالْعَصْرِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَالْعِشَاءِ. قَالَ سَعِيدٌ: فَقُلْتُ لِابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ: مَا حَمَلَهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ؟ قَالَ: أَرَادَ أَنْ لَا يُخْرِجَ أُمَّتَهُ.

Ibn ‘Abbās رضي الله عنه related to us that Allah's Messenger ﷺ would join the prayers when he was on a journey, and that during the battle of Tabuk he combined between Zuhri and ‘Aṣr and Maghrib and ‘Ishā’. Sa‘īd said, "I said to Ibn ‘Abbās, 'What motivated him to do that? He replied, 'He did not want to

¹⁵⁴ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-‘Ilm* [The Knowledge], Ch.: "Delivering Fatwas While Stationary upon an Animal," 1:43 §83; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Hajj* [The Hajj], Ch.: "Regarding the One Who Shaves His Head before Sacrificing or Sacrifices before Casting Stones," 2:948 §1306.

make things difficult for his *Umma*.¹⁵⁵

Reported by Muslim.

2.11 RECOMMENDATION OF LENIENCE AND TOLERANCE

Another manifestation of Islam's tolerance and moderation is the fact that the Prophet ﷺ forbade his noble Companions from engaging in perpetual fasts. This was out of his mercy toward them. They saw that the Prophet ﷺ would fast perpetually without breaking his fast, but he informed them that he was not like them, and that Allah provides him with food and drink. This has been mass-transmitted from the Prophet ﷺ and is mentioned in the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim from the hadith of Abū Hurayra, Ibn 'Umar, 'Ā'isha, Anas and Abū Sa'īd رضي الله عنه.

Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه reported,

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْوِصَالَ! قَالُوا: فَإِنَّكَ تَوَاصِلٌ، يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ!
قَالَ: إِنَّكُمْ لَسْتُمْ فِي ذَلِكَ مِثْلِي. إِنِّي أُبَيْتُ يُطْعِمُنِي رَبِّي وَيَسْقِينِي، فَالْكَفُّوا
مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Beware of perpetual fasting!' The Companions said, 'But you engage in perpetual fasts, O Allah's Messenger!' He said, 'Indeed, I am not like you all. I spend the night and my Lord provides me with food and drink. Take upon yourself the actions that you can bear.'¹⁵⁶

Agreed upon.

Another manifestation of Islam's tolerance, ease and mercy for the servants is the fact that the Prophet ﷺ encouraged us to be lenient when buying and selling and settling accounts, and in every other interaction we have with others. Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh رضي الله عنه reported that

¹⁵⁵ Set forth by •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *Ṣalāt al-musāfirin* [The Travelers' Prayer], Ch.: "On Combining between Two Prayers while Resident," 1:489 §705.

¹⁵⁶ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Ṣawm* [The Fasting], Ch.: "On Perpetual Fasts," 2:694 §1865; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Ṣiyām* [The Fasting], Ch.: "The Prohibition of Engaging in a Perpetual Fast," 2:774 §1103.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said,

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ رَجُلًا سَمَحًا إِذَا بَاعَ، وَإِذَا اشْتَرَى، وَإِذَا اقْتَضَى.

May Allah have mercy upon the man who is lenient when he buys, sells and settles accounts.¹⁵⁷

Reported by al-Bukhārī.

Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه related,

أَنَّ رَجُلًا تَقَاضَى رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ، فَأَغْلَظَ لَهُ. فَهَمَّ بِهِ أَصْحَابُهُ، فَقَالَ: دَعُوهُ فَإِنَّ لِصَاحِبِ الْحَقِّ مَقَالًا. وَاشْتَرَوْا لَهُ بَعِيرًا فَأَعْطُوهُ إِيَّاهُ. وَقَالُوا: لَا نَجِدُ إِلَّا أَفْضَلَ مِنْ سِنِّهِ. قَالَ: اشْتَرَوْهُ فَأَعْطُوهُ إِيَّاهُ. فَإِنَّ خَيْرَكُمْ أَحْسَنُكُمْ قَضَاءً.

A man asked Allah's Messenger ﷺ to settle his debt and began to speak coarsely to him. His Companions went for him and Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Leave him alone; the one with a right is allowed to speak. Buy him a camel and give it to him.' The Companions رضي الله عنهم said, 'O Allah's Messenger! We can only find one that is better than the age that this one warrants.' He said, 'Buy it and give it to him. The best of you is he who is most generous in settlement.'¹⁵⁸

Agreed upon.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ also explained to us the Afterworldly virtues of being lenient to the one who is in dire straits. Abū al-Yasar رضي الله عنه reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said,

مَنْ أَنْظَرَ مُعْسِرًا أَوْ وَضَعَ عَنْهُ أَظْلَمَ اللَّهُ فِي ظِلِّهِ.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Bk.: *al-Istiqrād* [The Loans], Ch.: "Easyness in Sale and Purchase," 2:730 §1970.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., Bk.: *al-Istiqrād* [The Loans], Ch.: "Seeking Loans for Camels," 2:842 §2260; •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Musāqāt* [The Sharecropping], Ch.: "On the One Whose Property is Damaged and Receives Something Better than It," 3:1225 §1601.

Whoever gives more time to the debtor in dire straits or forgoes his debt, Allah shall shade him in His Shade.¹⁵⁹

Reported by Muslim.

2.12 ALLAH'S PLEASURE LIES IN HELPING AND FORGIVING BEHAVIOUR

Abū Qatāda رضي الله عنه reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said,

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يُنَجِّيَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ كُرْبِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، فَلْيَنْفُسْ عَنْ مُعْسِرٍ أَوْ يَضَعْ عَنْهُ.

Whoever would be pleased that Allah grants him safety from a difficulty on the Day of Resurrection, let him relieve the difficulty of someone in dire straits, or let him forgo his debt.¹⁶⁰

Reported by Muslim.

Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said,

إِنْ رَجُلًا لَمْ يَعْمَلْ خَيْرًا قَطُّ وَكَانَ يُدَايِنُ النَّاسَ. فَيَقُولُ لِرَسُولِهِ: خُذْ مَا تَيْسَّرَ وَاتْرُكْ مَا عَسَرَ، وَتَجَاوَزْ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى أَنْ يَتَجَاوَزَ عَنَّا. فَلَمَّا هَلَكَ، قَالَ اللَّهُ لَهُ: هَلْ عَمِلْتَ خَيْرًا قَطُّ؟ قَالَ: لَا، إِلَّا أَنَّهُ كَانَ لِي غُلَامٌ، وَكُنْتُ أَدَايِنُ النَّاسَ، فَإِذَا بَعَثْتُهُ لِيَتَقَاضَى، قُلْتُ لَهُ: خُذْ مَا تَيْسَّرَ وَاتْرُكْ مَا عَسَرَ، وَتَجَاوَزْ لَعَلَّ اللَّهَ يَتَجَاوَزَ عَنَّا. قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى: قَدْ تَجَاوَزْتُ عَنْكَ.

There was a man who was extremely lax in performing good deeds and he used to loan money to people. [When he would loan money out] he would say to his secretary, "Take [in repayment of a loan] that which is easy and leave that which is difficult and overlook it, for perhaps God Most High will overlook us [our faults]." When that man perished, God

¹⁵⁹ Set forth by •Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Zuhd* [Renunciation], Ch.: "The Long Hadith of Jābir and the Story of Abū al-Yasar," 4:2302 §3006.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., Bk.: *al-Musāqāt* [The Sharecropping], Ch.: "On Giving Reprieve to the Debtor," 3:1196 §1563.

Most High said to him, "Did you ever do any good deeds?" The man replied, "No, but I did have a young servant and I used to loan money to people, so when I would send him to collect the money owed, I would say to him, 'Take that which is easy and leave that which is difficult and overlook it, for perhaps God Most High will overlook us'." God then said, "I have overlooked your faults."¹⁶¹

Reported by Aḥmad and this is the wording of al-Nasā'ī.

2.13 EVERYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE UNLESS EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED

Allah ﷻ has blessed the Umma with great favour and bounty, originally declaring everything permissible and *ḥalāl*. Only those things that are expressly declared *ḥarām* in the Holy Qur'ān or Sunna are forbidden. This principle has been termed as *al-ibāḥa al-aṣliyya*. The Holy Qur'ān has revealed:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا﴾

﴿He is the One Who created for you all that is in the earth.﴾¹⁶²

Allah ﷻ has created everything for the benefit of humankind.¹⁶³ However, the law of prohibition restrains this phenomenon concerning the things Shariah has forbidden. This principle of permissibility encompasses all the animals, birds, plants and human acts except those declared forbidden in Islam. Interpreting this verse, al-Nasafī and al-Zamakhsharī write:

﴿خَلَقَ لَكُمْ﴾ عَلَى أَنَّ الْأَشْيَاءَ الَّتِي يَصِحُّ أَنْ يُتَّفَعَ بِهَا، وَلَمْ تَجْرِ مَجْرَى الْمَحْظُورَاتِ فِي الْعَقْلِ، خُلِقَتْ فِي الْأَصْلِ مَبَاحَةً مُطْلَقًا. لِكُلِّ أَحَدٍ أَنْ

¹⁶¹ Set forth by •Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in *al-Musnad*, 2:361 §8715; •al-Nasā'ī in *al-Sunan*: Bk.: *al-Buyū'* [The Sales], Ch.: "On Dealing with Others Well and Being Kind in Seeking Repayment of Loans," 7:381 §3696; •Ibn Ḥibbān in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 11:422 §5403; •al-Ḥakīm in *al-Mustadrak*, 2:33 §2223.

¹⁶² Qur'ān 2:29.

¹⁶³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 1:149.

يَتَنَاوَلَهَا وَيَسْتَنْفَعُ بِهَا.

The phrase *khalafa lakum* «He created for you all» implies the things that are profited to the maximum and do not harm wisdom (mental faculties) any way. All such things are originally permissible and everyone can use and benefit from them.¹⁶⁴

Another verse of the Holy Qur'an explicitly elaborates:

﴿قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ﴾

«Say: Who has forbidden the adornment (and beautification) of Allah that He has produced for His servants and (who has also forbidden) the pure and clean food?»¹⁶⁵

Here Allah ﷻ has enjoined His Beloved Prophet ﷺ to forbid people nudity and indecency and declare lawful the embellishment and decent embroidery on dresses and whatever has been made permissible in foods and beverages.¹⁶⁶

Interpreting this verse, Abū al-Sa'ūd writes:

وَفِيهِ دَلِيلٌ عَلَى أَنَّ الْأَصْلَ فِي الْمَطَاعِمِ وَالْمَلَابِسِ وَأَنْوَاعِ التَّجَمُّلَاتِ
الْإِبَاحَةُ.

Here is a proof that originally all foods, dresses and diverse ways of ornamentation are permissible.¹⁶⁷

In the preceding verse (7:31), Almighty Allah states:

﴿وَأَشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ﴾

¹⁶⁴ Al-Nasafi, *Madārik al-tanzil*, 1:35; •Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf 'an haqā'iq ghawāmiḍ al-tanzīl*, 1:152.

¹⁶⁵ Qur'an 7:32.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'an*, 8:163.

¹⁶⁷ Abū al-Sa'ūd, *Irshād al-aql al-salīm ilā mazāyā al-Qur'an al-karīm*, 3:224.

﴿And eat and drink, but do not spend extravagantly because certainly He does not like the extravagant.﴾¹⁶⁸

Al-Ṭabarī has stated that *lā tusrifū* ﴿do not spend extravagantly﴾ also means 'do not declare anything forbidden unless I have declared it *ḥarām* in My Book or on the tongue of My Beloved Prophet ﷺ'.¹⁶⁹

The examples to prove the validation of benefit principle are many where Allah ﷻ has clearly mentioned the forbidden things. However, He has not issued any injunctions to declare things that are permissible because they include ﴿all that is created for you in the earth﴾.

When it comes to the relations forbidden for marriage, described in detail in verse 4:23, He has clearly revealed the permissible relations in the very next verse:

﴿وَأَحَلَّ لَكُم مَّا وَرَاءَ ذَٰلِكُمْ﴾

﴿And (all women) other than these are made lawful for you.﴾¹⁷⁰

He has categorically mentioned the detailed list of forbidden relations for wedlock and clearly stated that every other relation is fair for the contract of marriage.

In like manner, Allah has described the forbidden animals in the Holy Qur'ān, but has not mentioned the permissible foods anywhere. He said:

﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ
وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا
ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَمِ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ﴾

﴿Forbidden to you is carrion (the animal that dies and is not slaughtered according to Islamic law) and (the discharged) blood and pork and that (animal) on which the name of someone other than Allah has been invoked whilst

¹⁶⁸ Qur'ān 7:31.

¹⁶⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, 8:159.

¹⁷⁰ Qur'ān 4:24.

*slaughtering and (the animal) that dies by strangling or by a violent blow (not by any sharp instrument) or by falling from a height or the one that has been gored to death or which has been ripped apart and gnawed by a wild beast, save the one which you slaughter (before it dies), and (that animal too is forbidden) which has been slaughtered on idolatrous altars (dedicated to false gods). And this (is also unlawful) that you learn your fortune through divining (with arrows or divide shares by such means). All these works are sins.*¹⁷¹

﴿قَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ﴾

*He has spelled out to you in detail (all) those things which He has forbidden to you.*¹⁷²

This explains why Allah ﷻ has forbidden asking many questions. A question may elicit reply amounting to the commandment of forbiddance of the thing questioned. Allah ﷻ has said:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنْ أَشْيَاءَ إِن تُبَدَّ لَكُمْ تَسْأَلُكُمْ وَإِن تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلَ الْقُرْءَانُ تُبَدَّ لَكُمْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
حَلِيمٌ﴾

*O believers! Do not ask about things (on which the Qur'ān is quiet,) for if they are disclosed to you, they may put you in strain (and you will be repelled by them). But if you enquire about them whilst the Qur'ān is being sent down, they will be disclosed to you (i.e., fixated through revealing the commandments, but this will put an end to your choice of discretion, binding you to only one command). Allah has (so far) overlooked (these matters and questions), and Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Forbearing.*¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 5:3.

¹⁷² Ibid., 6:119.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 5:101.

This verse signifies that if a clear command has not yet been revealed about a matter, people should not ask about it because Allah ﷻ may reveal its forbiddance in reply to the question, restricting the choice. It alludes to the original permissibility of that thing before it is questioned about.

The pagan Arabs had forbidden themselves the meat or milk of certain animals of their own accord. Allah ﷻ categorically condemned it, challenging who vested them with the authority to declare this forbidden and that permissible. Allah ﷻ said:

﴿وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَا تَصِفُ أَلْسِنَتُكُمُ الْكَذِبَ هَذَا حَلَالٌ وَهَذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفْتَرُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ لَا يُفْلِحُونَ﴾

«And do not tell a lie which your tongues utter: 'This is lawful and that is forbidden,' thus fabricating a lie against Allah. Indeed, those who fabricate lies against Allah will (never) be delivered.»¹⁷⁴

Elsewhere Allah ﷻ condemns their subjective preferences:

﴿قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ مِّن رِّزْقٍ فَجَعَلْتُم مِّنْهُ حَرَامًا وَحَلَالًا قُلْ ءَاللهُ أَذِنَ لَكُمْ أَمْ عَلَى اللَّهِ تَفْتَرُونَ﴾

«Say: 'Give your view: Allah sent down for you (pure and clean) provision, but you declared some of those (things) unlawful and (others) lawful.' Say: 'Did Allah accord you (its) permission? Or are you fabricating a lie against Allah?'»¹⁷⁵

Both these verses prove that all things are permissible in origin unless declared forbidden by Allah or His Prophet ﷺ. No human has the authority to declare anything forbidden.

The Prophet of Mercy ﷺ also stated this principle of permissibility in many traditions. Salmān ؓ has narrated:

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 16:116.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 10:59.

سُئِلَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ عَنِ السَّمَنِ وَالْجُبْنِ وَالْفِرَاءِ. فَقَالَ: الْحَلَالُ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ، وَالْحَرَامُ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ، وَمَا سَكَتَ عَنْهُ فَهُوَ مِمَّا عَفَا عَنْهُ.

Once Allah's Messenger ﷺ was asked about ghee, cheese and furry clothes. He replied, 'Permissible is what Allah has declared permissible in His Book and forbidden is what Allah has declared forbidden in His Book; and the things about which He has remained silent are forgiven.'¹⁷⁶

Reported by al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah.

According to Sa'd b. Abī al-Waqqāṣ ﷺ, the Prophet of Mercy said:

إِنَّ أَعْظَمَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ جُرْمًا مَنْ سَأَلَ عَنْ شَيْءٍ لَمْ يُحَرِّمْ، فَحَرَّمَ مِنْ أَجْلِ مَسْأَلَتِهِ.

The Muslim with the greatest sin is the one who asks about something that has not been forbidden, but then it was forbidden because he asked about it.¹⁷⁷

Reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

This saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ clearly establishes the fact that the categorical commandment of Allah ﷻ or His Prophet ﷺ is an unavoidable pre-requisite for declaring something forbidden. If something has not been decreed forbidden, that act or thing will be considered permissible in Shariah.

¹⁷⁶ Set forth by •al-Tirmidhī in *al-Sunan*: Bk.: *al-Libās* [The Dresses], Ch.: "What is said about furry clothes?" 4:220 §1726; and Ibn Mājah in *al-Sunan*: Bk.: *al-Aṭ'ima* [The Foods], Ch.: "Eating of ghee and cheese," 2:1117 §3367.

¹⁷⁷ Set forth by •al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-I'tiṣām bi al-Kitāb wa al-Sunna* [Holding Fast to the Book and the Sunna], Ch.: "What is disliked of asking too many questions and burdening oneself with that which does not concern one," 6:2658 §6859; and Muslim in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Faḍā'il* [The Virtues and Merits], Ch.: "The Prophet's veneration and leaving aside the questions which are not required," 4:1831 §2358.

Explaining this hadith, Ibn ʿajar al-ʿAsqalānī writes:

إِنَّ السُّؤَالَ عَنِ الشَّيْءِ بِحَيْثُ يَصِيرُ سَبَبًا لِتَحْرِيمِ شَيْءٍ مُبَاحٍ، هُوَ أَعْظَمُ
الْجُرْمِ لِأَنَّهُ صَارَ سَبَبًا لِتَضْيِيقِ الْأَمْرِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْمُكَلَّفِينَ؛ فَالْقَتْلُ -
مَثَلًا - كَبِيرَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ مَضَرَّتَهُ رَاجِعَةٌ إِلَى الْمَقْتُولِ وَحْدَهُ، أَوْ إِلَى مَنْ هُوَ
مِنْهُ بِسَبِيلٍ بِخِلَافِ صُورَةِ الْمَسْأَلَةِ، فَضَرَرُهَا عَامٌّ لِلْجَمِيعِ. ... وَفِي
الْحَدِيثِ أَنَّ الْأَصْلَ فِي الْأَشْيَاءِ الْإِبَاحَةُ حَتَّى يَرِدَ الشَّرْعُ بِخِلَافِ ذَلِكَ.

If a question effects prohibition of a thing, questioning becomes a major sin as it brings about the stricture of law and constrains all Muslims to forbiddance of a permissible thing. Killing someone is a major sin but its harm is only limited to the person murdered. Contrarily, the harm of enticing prohibition of a thing through raising a question affects the entire Muslim community. ... And the hadith narrates that, originally, things are permissible until some commandment is found that annuls the permissibility.¹⁷⁸

Allah ﷻ and His Beloved Prophet ﷺ expanded the sphere of *ḥilla* (permissibility) and constricted the ambit of prohibition and forbiddance (*ḥurma*) for the welfare of mankind. Following is the famous legal maxim that vividly depicts the unanimous viewpoint of imams in the books of Islamic jurisprudence:

الْأَصْلُ فِي الْأَشْيَاءِ إِبَاحَةٌ.

The original rule for everything is permissibility (unless a legal evidence prohibits it).¹⁷⁹

In this way, practising Islamic teachings and injunctions has been made easy through the humanitarian principle of *al-ibāḥa al-aṣliyya*.

¹⁷⁸ Ibn ʿajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-bārī*, 13:268.

¹⁷⁹ Cited by •al-Sarakhsī in *al-Mabṣūṭ*, 24:77; and al-Suyūṭī in *al-Ashbāḥ wa al-naẓāʾir*, p. 60.

2.14 LEGAL DISPENSATIONS UNDER PRESSING NEEDS

The boundless mercy of the Holy Prophet ﷺ covers the dire human needs and sanctions many exemptions from forbiddance. These dispensations vary from permission of certain food items to concessions in some farming and commercial practices. We can eat fish and locust, liver and spleen, and can practise contracts, such as *arāyā* [to give away one or two palm trees for someone to sell], and farming and commerce, such as sharecropping, sales on credit [*nasiya*], the right of returning goods [*khiyār al-majlis*], advance payments [*salam*], preemption [*shuf'a*] and so forth.

While proclaiming the forbidden foods, Allah ﷻ has conceded dispensations as well when life is under threat:

﴿إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

«He has made unlawful for you only the dead animals and blood and the flesh of swine and the animal over which, whilst sacrificing, the name of someone other than Allah has been invoked. But he who is forced by necessity and is neither disobedient nor transgressing will not incur any sin on himself (if he eats that much which is required to survive). Allah is, indeed, Most Forgiving, Ever-Merciful.»¹⁸⁰

Here Allah ﷻ has allowed to eat the forbidden foods to save one's life. It means that Islam does not question such acts as are committed in a state of dire need.

Protection and safeguard of human life is incumbent upon the individual himself. Islam has declared several food items unlawful due to various reasons:

﴿حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ﴾

¹⁸⁰ Qur'ān 2:173.

«Forbidden to you is carrion (the animal that dies and is not slaughtered according to Islamic law) and (the discharged) blood and pork and that (animal) on which the name of someone other than Allah has been invoked whilst slaughtering and (the animal) that dies by strangling or by a violent blow (not by any sharp instrument) or by falling from a height or the one that has been gored to death or which has been ripped apart and gnawed by a wild beast, save the one which you slaughter (before it dies), and (that animal too is forbidden) which has been slaughtered on idolatrous altars (dedicated to false gods).»¹⁸¹

Islamic law may even award punishment to a believer on consuming certain unlawful items. Contrarily, Islam decrees to eat or drink these illicit objects when it becomes necessary to save life under survival conditions:

﴿فَمَنْ أَضْطَرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

«Then if someone gets into a survival situation (and is forced by) ravenous hunger (and intense thirst i.e., driven by dire necessity, provided) he is not prone to sinning (i.e., eats what is forbidden without being wilfully inclined to sin), then Allah is indeed Most Forgiving, Ever-Merciful.»¹⁸²

When a clear law has explained what is lawful and unlawful in food, it is wrong for humans to proclaim anything lawful that is scripturally forbidden.

Allah has revealed in *sūra al-An'ām* (6:119):

﴿وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَضَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا

حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطَرَرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ﴾

«And what is the matter with you that you do not eat of that (meat) over which the Name of Allah has been pronounced (at the time of slaughter? You regard these lawful animals

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 5:3.

¹⁸² Ibid.

as unlawful without any reason), whilst He has spelled out to you in detail (all) those things which He has forbidden to you except when (under the unavoidable circumstances) you are forced (to eat the bare necessity just as a life-saving measure. So do not declare more things forbidden on your own anymore).»

See the following verse of *sūra al-An'ām* (6:145):

﴿قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهْلًا لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

«Say: 'I do not find in that Revelation which has been sent to me anything forbidden to anyone who eats (such things) as he takes in food except carrion, or flowing blood, or the flesh of swine, for it is filthy and impious, or the sinfully-slaughtered animal on which some name other than Allah's Name has been invoked at the time of slaughter. But he who becomes helpless (due to hunger), and is neither disobeying nor transgressing, then surely your Lord is Most Forgiving, Ever-Merciful.'»

On another occasion, the Holy Qur'an has proclaimed:

﴿إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلًا لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

«He has only forbidden you carrion, blood, the flesh of swine and (the animal) on which the name of other than Allah is invoked at the time of slaughter. But he who is faced with a survival condition (forced by necessity), neither defying (Allah's injunctions seeking taste of lust), nor transgressing (the limit of necessity), then Allah is surely Most Forgiving, Ever-Merciful.»¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Ibid., 16:115.

These verses of the Holy Qur'ān have unambiguously described the forbidden things. Alongside forbiddance, Allah ﷻ has also conferred exception to the rule on those who face some danger to their life. This signifies the right to life. Since human life has to be saved at all costs, the law of forbiddance is held in abeyance under survival conditions. Islam does not allow the believers to kill themselves with their own hands, i.e., through following the injunctions of Islam strictly without caring for necessities of life. For example, ablution is necessary before offering the ritual prayer, but if one does not find water or cannot perform ablution, he is allowed dry ablution—*tayammum*—to rub face and hands with pure dust. The Holy Qur'ān states:

﴿وَأِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ﴾

«And if you are sick, or on a journey, or return from a call of nature, or make sexual contact with (your) women and then fail to find water, then clean yourselves by using pure soil. So wipe your faces and hands.»¹⁸⁴

The philosophy of *tayammum* has been described in the following verse:

﴿مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَٰكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

«Allah does not want to make things hard for you, but He wants to purify you, and complete the bestowal of His favour upon you so that you may become grateful.»¹⁸⁵

This is the philosophy of ease and exception in Islam. We find numerous examples of dispensation practised in the Prophet's life and in the Caliphate period as well.

Islam has prohibited men from wearing silk. However, the Holy

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 4:43.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 5:6.

Prophet ﷺ allowed two of his Companions to don silk. They are ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf and al-Zubayr رضي الله عنه. He awarded them this exception on medical grounds. According to Anas رضي الله عنه:

أَنَّ عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنَ عَوْفٍ وَالزُّبَيْرَ شَكَوَا إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يَعْنِي الْقَمَلَ،
فَأَرْخَصَ لَهُمَا فِي الْحَرِيرِ، فَرَأَيْتُهُ عَلَيْهِمَا فِي غَزَاةٍ.

‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf and al-Zubayr رضي الله عنه complained to the Prophet ﷺ about lice, and he allowed them to wear silk. I saw them wearing it during an expedition.¹⁸⁶

Reported by al-Bukhārī.

Abū Wāqid al-Laythī رضي الله عنه narrated:

قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ! إِنَّا بِأَرْضٍ تُصِيبُنَا بِهَا مَحْمَصَةٌ، فَمَا يَحِلُّ لَنَا مِنَ
الْمَيْتَةِ؟ قَالَ: إِذَا لَمْ تَصْطَبِحُوا وَلَمْ تَغْتَبِقُوا وَلَمْ تَحْتَفِئُوا بَقْلًا، فَشَأْنُكُمْ
بِهَا.

I said, ‘O Messenger of Allah! We live in a land where famine often strikes us. Therefore, we do not have any option to avoid dead meat.’ The Prophet ﷺ replied, ‘When you do not find food for lunch and dinner, nor have any produce to eat, then eat from it.’¹⁸⁷

Only Aḥmad collected this narration and its chain meets the criteria of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*.

These Qur’ānic verses and Prophetic traditions have established that Islam wants to save human life in every situation and under all circumstances. If one cannot save life except by making use of forbidden things, one is allowed to take them as much as is required for survival. If some obligatory acts of worship strait-lace the performance of the rituals, Shariah allows relaxation in performing the obligatory acts of worship to protect life. For example, if

¹⁸⁶ Set forth by al-Bukhārī in *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bk.: *al-Jihād wa al-siyar* [Jihad and Military Expeditions], Ch.: “Silk during war,” 3:169 §2763.

¹⁸⁷ Set forth by Aḥmad b. anbal in *al-Musnad*, 5:218 §§21948, 21951; and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 9:356.

someone fears loss of life due to enemy assault in the state of offering ritual prayer, he is allowed to break the prayer to safeguard his life. If someone's life is threatened due to extreme hunger or thirst while fasting, he can break his fast. A woman who fears abortion due to unbearable condition while fasting has the permission to break her fast. If someone fails to find the safe way to Mecca to perform pilgrimage, he can defer this duty to perform Hajj. Islam has sanctioned these and many other dispensations to ease the believers to protect their lives from impending dangers.

These are a few examples of some extreme necessities where Islam allows exception to the rule for the safety of human life. The authorities on Islamic jurisprudence have formulated the following principles pertaining to the conditions of necessity:

الضَّرُورَاتُ تُبَيِّحُ الْمَحْظُورَاتِ.

Necessities legalize exception to prohibitions.¹⁸⁸

الْأَمْرُ إِذَا ضَاقَ اتَّسَعَ.

When a matter constricts, it dilates and expands.¹⁸⁹

2.15 SUMMARY

In sum, the manifestations of ease and tolerance in Islam are manifold and include every foundation and subsidiary branch of the religion. Another manifestation of the ease and tolerance of Islam is the fact that worship is made easy. It is difficult to present the individual proofs for all the examples of ease in our religion, but let us look at the ease found in the main issues. When it comes to ritual purification [*ṭahāra*], the Lawgiver has allowed us to purify ourselves with seawater and other types of water, just as He has allowed dry ablution for the one who cannot find water, or who finds it difficult to use. Likewise, He has allowed us to wipe over leather socks due to cold weather and the

¹⁸⁸ Cited by •al-Sarakhsī in *al-Mabṣūṭ*, 10:154; and al-Shāṭibī in *al-Muwāfaqāt*, 4:145-146.

¹⁸⁹ Cited by •al-Nawawī in *al-Majmūʿ*, 1:576 & 8:16, 204; and al-Suyūṭī in *al-Ashbāh wa al-naẓāʾir*, p. 83.

like. Moreover, the Lawgiver has informed us that the believer is not considered impure, even if he is in a state requiring major ritual purity [*junub*] and so on and so forth.

2.15.1 OBLIGATORY PRAYER

When it comes to prayer, the Lawgiver has allowed us to join and shorten them when travelling. He has allowed us to pray our supererogatory prayers on a riding animal, no matter what direction it turns. The Lawgiver has not made the ritual prayer conditional upon its performance in a particular place—it is allowed anywhere—and He has not made it incumbent on women to pray during menses.

2.15.2 OBLIGATORY FASTING

When it comes to fasting, the Lawgiver has allowed us to break our fast during journeys, and has allowed us to break it while being resident if we are unable to fast due to sickness and the like. Likewise, it is allowed to eat, drink and have intimate relations during the nights of Ramaḍān.

2.15.3 OBLIGATORY CHARITY [ZAKAT]

When it comes to Zakat, the Lawgiver has only made it incumbent upon those who possess the minimum required amount to pay [*niṣāb*] and it has been in their possession for a year. Not only that, but the actual percentage of money that is paid as Zakat is small, and it is not due on items that are used.

2.15.4 PERFORMANCE OF HAJJ

When it comes to the Hajj, the Lawgiver has not made it compulsory upon the one who is able, provided the way is secure. He has allowed certain actions to be done before or after their proper time on the day of sacrifice, and nothing of the Prophet's actions on that day was made obligatory except for the standing. Likewise, the one upon whom there is an expiation is given the choice of performing a sacrifice, fasting or feeding the poor.

2.15.5 TENETS OF FAITH

When it comes to the tenets of faith [*‘aqīda*], the texts of the Shariah are vividly clear. There is no obscurity, complication or inexplicability. The rulings of the Sacred Law are applied according to their outward purport and no one is given a burden heavier than he or she can bear. There is no extremism in the religion, and simple mistakes, forgetfulness and coercion are forgiven. In our doctrine, the basis for things is that of permissibility [*ibāḥa*], and the forbidden things are relatively few in comparison to the great number of things that are allowed.

2.15.6 ACTS OF WORSHIP

When it comes to acts of worship, it is recommended to follow the legal dispensations just as it is recommended to follow the strictures of the law. Legal dispensations include shortening prayers during travel, breaking the fast during sickness or journey, performing the dry ablution when water is either absent or difficult to use, reciting the Qur’ān in one of the seven modes of recitation, being brief in one’s prayer and not lengthening it, and praying while seated for the one who is unable to stand and so on.

2.15.7 MANNER OF INVITATION [DA‘WA]

When it comes to invitation and calling others, the calling is to be done with wisdom and goodly preaching and the caller should listen to the views of others. The caller should not isolate himself or herself or charge the Muslims with disbelief or blameworthy innovations and so on.

2.15.8 MU‘ĀMALĀT [INTERACTIONS]

When it comes to interactions [*mu‘āmalāt*], we are encouraged to be lenient in buying and selling. Both the buyer and the seller should have the option of return. It is urged to forgive the debtor who is in dire straits and it is prohibited to unjustly consume the wealth of orphans and so on.

2.15.9 MARRIAGE

When it comes to marriage, it is allowed for the potential groom to look at the potential bride with the intention of betrothing her. In addition, Islam recommends setting a low dowry price and making marriage easy. It is made incumbent for the husband to financially maintain his wife and it has legislated divorce and annulment.

2.15.10 FAMILY RELATIONS

When it comes to personal relations, Islam prescribes familial piety, kindness to seniors and inheritance. It demands that the roads are given their rights. It allows for people to interact with women during their menses and informs us that their actions are permissible and that they do not defile the home, beddings or food.

2.15.11 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

When it comes to international relations, Islam's tolerance and ease manifests in times of peace and war. It enjoins kind treatment to the prisoners of war and forbids finishing the wounded off. It prescribes kind treatment to the People of the Scripture and the inhabitants of conquered lands and commands that we bury their dead.

2.15.12 SINS AND PUNISHMENTS

Other examples include: cancellation of the punishment of death for the person if the victim's heirs agree to accept blood-money; prayer in any location; the sufficiency of repentance and remorse; the legality of dry ablution when water is absent or difficult to use; removal of the punishment in the grave for one who does not safeguard himself from urine dropping on his clothing or skin (it being sufficient to wash the affected location with water); the removal of sin from one who errs or forgets or is coerced; the dispensation for husband and close male relatives to mix with menstruating women; and many other things that were considered unlawful in the previous communities.

And finally, when it comes to the self and the psyche, Islam has allowed the good things and forbidden the vile things. All of these are

bounties from Allah ﷻ and indicate the immense tolerance and mercy of Islam.